

Activity 9.2: Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge

Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)

Professional Development

2016 Final Report

Contract Number
27712

Submitted to the:
North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education

On behalf of:
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Introduction

The revision of North Carolina's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) at the behest of the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council, necessitated a statewide effort to disseminate and promote awareness and understanding of the revised standards by early care and education (ECE) classroom teachers, program directors and family child care providers; by early care and education faculty at 2- and 4-year colleges; and by those in the child care resource and referral field and beyond who deliver training and technical assistance to improve ECE classroom and program quality. This report will provide a summary of the accomplishments of the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant (RttT-ELC): Activity 9.2 – Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Professional Development. A summary of the accomplishments of this initiative, including subjective information about lessons learned, challenges, successes and any implications across for future policy decisions is included.

Activity 9.2: Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Professional Development

North Carolina's comprehensive set of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), known as the *Foundations*, were published in 2004 for pre-school children and in 2008 for infants and toddlers. In 2013, these standards were revised. Under the leadership of NC's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), a diverse standards revision committee created a new document entitled *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Foundations)* that:

- created a more cohesive set of standards across the birth to five age range;
- enhanced alignment of the standards across birth to five age range, with the new Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and with the kindergarten standards;
- strengthened the emphasis on the appropriateness of the standards for culturally and linguistically diverse children and families; and
- improved guidance for how the ELDS are used with children with disabilities.

Per NC's Race to The Top - Early Learning Challenge grant application, the revision process included reviews and recommendations from national and state-level experts in the areas of cultural competency, second language acquisition, child development, early childhood education, and professional development, along with representation from a variety of stakeholder groups within the state. The revision process included resources and a comprehensive plan are needed to promote awareness and utilization of the new standards. Without such a plan, it would have been unlikely that those who work directly with young children would be aware of and/or use the revised ELDS to inform their teaching practices. Moreover, based on lessons learned from the rollout of the original *Foundations* documents, resources were needed to develop strategies to help those engaged in delivering ECE professional development (both at higher education and training levels) and technical assistance to know how to effectively use the revised Standards within their spheres of influence and practice.

Specifically, this RttT-ELC Project aimed to support the ECAC and NC DCDEE by implementing an array of strategies to increase awareness of and obtain buy-in for the revised ELDS and to assist the ECE professional development, higher education, and technical assistance workforce in developing strategies/approaches to successfully incorporate the revised standards into college courses and TA practice (such that ECE classroom and program staff use these standards to improve and inform the intentionality and quality of ECE services).

Please see chart on the next page for achievement of specific performance measures.

RttT ELC Final Progress Report for Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) Professional Development

Outcomes and Outputs	Year 1 (2012)	Year 2 (2013)	Year 3 (2014)	Year 4 (2015)	Final Results
Staff/Contractor(s) to develop .5 CEU on revised ELDS is identified and hired/contracted	Not Met Due to NCDCDEE start-up delays	Met A sub-contractor was identified and approved by NC DCDEE in March, 2013. The initial sub-contractor resigned in July of 2013, and was replaced by Dr. Susan Catapano in August, 2013.			Met A sub-contractor was identified and approved by NC DCDEE in March, 2013. The initial sub-contractor resigned in July of 2013, and was replaced by Dr. Susan Catapano in August, 2013.
At the conclusion of the RTT/ELC calendar year 2012, a draft of the revised ELDS .5 CEU will be in development	Not Met Due to NCDCDEE start-up delays	Met A draft syllabus was reviewed and approved by NC DCDEE and the ELDS Leadership Team in May, 2013.			Met A draft syllabus was reviewed and approved by NC DCDEE and the ELDS Leadership Team in May, 2013.
.5 Revised ELDS CEU and Trainer's Guide is drafted		Met A draft of the Trainer's Guide was completed and submitted to NC DCDEE in May, 2013.			Met A draft of the Trainer's Guide was completed and submitted to NC DCDEE in May, 2013.
.5 CEU Revised ELDS Course is field-tested with ELD classroom and program staff.		Not Met Field tests were delayed until CY14 due to the federal government shut-down which impacted this contract.	Met Field tests were completed in January, 2014. One with early care and education classroom practitioners (13 participants), and one with child care resource and referral staff and other cross-sector TA practitioners (13 participants).		Met Field tests were completed in January, 2014. One with early care and education classroom practitioners (13 participants), and one with child care resource and referral staff and other cross-sector TA practitioners (13 participants).

Outcomes and Outputs	Year 1 (2012)	Year 2 (2013)	Year 3 (2014)	Year 4 (2015)	Final Results																																
.5 Revised ELDS CEU and Trainer's Guide is revised as warranted by field test, finalized and approved by NCDCEE.			Met Revisions to the curriculum were completed and approved by NC DCDEE in February, 2014.		Met Revisions to the curriculum were completed and approved by NC DCDEE in February, 2014.																																
CCR&R and cross-sector ECE trainers' trained to deliver .5 Revised ELDS CEU Course across NC			Met Five Train-the-Trainer sessions were convened in CY14. Durham - February 17, 2014 Greenville - February 20, 2014 Charlotte - March 5, 2014 Durham - April 7, 2014 Greensboro - September 8, 2014 During these sessions, 100 individuals were trained as trainers in the 0.5 CEU curriculum. <table><tr><th>CCR&R Region</th><th>Number Trained</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Cross-Sector Partners</td><td>Head Start – 1 Early Learning Network – 1 EESLPD - 11</td></tr></table>	CCR&R Region	Number Trained	1	5	2	4	3	10	4	5	5	10	6	10	7	5	8	5	9	6	10	6	11	6	12	7	13	5	14	3	Cross-Sector Partners	Head Start – 1 Early Learning Network – 1 EESLPD - 11		Met Five Train-the-Trainer sessions were convened in CY14. Durham - February 17, 2014 Greenville - February 20, 2014 Charlotte - March 5, 2014 Durham - April 7, 2014 Greensboro - September 8, 2014 During these sessions, approximately 100 individuals were trained as trainers in the 0.5 CEU curriculum.
CCR&R Region	Number Trained																																				
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Cross-Sector Partners	Head Start – 1 Early Learning Network – 1 EESLPD - 11																																				

At the conclusion of the RTT/ELC calendar year 2013, 100% of all fourteen CCR&R regions will have at least one PD staff member trained to deliver revised ELDS .5 CEU; 85% of regions will have at least two PD staff members trained to deliver revised ELDS .5 CEU.			<p>Exceeded At the end of CY 14, each of the 14 CCR&R regions had more than 1 PD staff trained as trainers in the 0.5 CEU Curriculum.</p> <p>100% of the 14 regions had more than 2 PD staff trained as trainers.</p> <p>A total of 87 CCR&R staff were trained by the end of CY14.</p>		<p>Exceeded At the end of CY 14, each of the 14 CCR&R regions had more than 1 PD staff trained as trainers in the 0.5 CEU Curriculum.</p> <p>100% of the 14 regions had more than 2 PD staff trained as trainers.</p> <p>A total of 87 CCR&R staff were trained by the end of CY14.</p>
At the conclusion of the RTT/ELC contract year 2013, 85% of participants in Train the Trainers sessions will demonstrate increased knowledge about the revised ELDS.			<p>Exceeded At the conclusion of CY14, 100% of CCR&R staff who participated in Train the Trainer demonstrated an increased knowledge about the revised ELDS based on self-report on their event evaluation.</p>		<p>Exceeded At the conclusion of CY14, 100% of CCR&R staff who participated in Train the Trainer demonstrated an increased knowledge about the revised ELDS based on self-report on their event evaluation.</p>
Staff/Contractor(s) identified to plan and convene the Higher Education/ cross ECE sector TA practitioner institutes		<p>Met Dr. Susan Catapano executed a contract in August 2013 which included all deliverables for this project (including the planning and completion of the Higher Education/TA practitioner Institutes).</p>			<p>Met Dr. Susan Catapano executed a contract in August 2013 which included all deliverables for this project (including the planning and completion of the Higher Education/TA practitioner Institutes).</p>

Outcomes and Outputs	Year 1 (2012)	Year 2 (2013)	Year 3 (2014)	Year 4 (2015)	Final Results
At the conclusion of the RTT/ELC contract year 2013, 85% of participants in Higher Education Faculty/ cross ECE sector TA Institutes will demonstrate increased knowledge about the revised ELDS and how to use it			Exceeded At the conclusion of CY14, 100% of participants in the Higher Education/TA Institutes demonstrated an increased knowledge about the revised ELDS based on self-report on their event evaluation.		Exceeded At the conclusion of CY14, 100% of participants in the Higher Education/TA Institutes demonstrated an increased knowledge about the revised ELDS based on self-report on their event evaluation.
Higher Education Faculty/TA Practitioner Institutes re: revised ELDS convened				Met Three Higher Education/TA Institutes were convened in CY14: March 5 th , Central Piedmont Community College March 6 th , Blue Ridge Community College April 28 th , Johnston County Community College. In total, 126 individuals attended the Institutes.	Met Three Higher Education/TA Institutes were convened in CY14: March 5 th , Central Piedmont Community College March 6 th , Blue Ridge Community College April 28 th , Johnston County Community College. In total, 126 individuals attended the Institutes.
Guide to inform Higher Education faculty/TA Practitioner use of Revised ELDS is developed, finalized and approved.				Met The <i>Promising Practices</i> document, a guide to inform higher education faculty as well as TA practitioners, was developed and approved by NC DCDEE in December 2015, and is currently being added to Moodle.	Met The <i>Promising Practices</i> document, a guide to inform higher education faculty as well as TA practitioners, was developed and approved by NC DCDEE in December 2015, and is currently being added to Moodle.

Outcomes and Outputs	Year 1 (2012)	Year 2 (2013)	Year 3 (2014)	Year 4 (2015)	Final Results
Asynchronous, self-paced, online <i>Foundations</i> .5 CEU created and approved for pilot.				Met The online, asynchronous, self-paced <i>Foundations</i> 0.5 CEU was reviewed and approved for piloting by NC DCDEE in April 2015.	Met The online, asynchronous, self-paced <i>Foundations</i> 0.5 CEU was reviewed and approved for piloting by NC DCDEE in April 2015.
By February 2015, a self-paced online version of <i>Foundations</i> will have been developed, field tested, finalized and approved by DCDEE, and will be available statewide for interested ECE practitioners.				Met The self-paced, online version of the <i>Foundations</i> 0.5 CEU was developed, approved by NC DCDEE (April 2015), piloted (June 2015), revised, and ready for use by ECE practitioners in June 2015.	Met The self-paced, online version of the <i>Foundations</i> 0.5 CEU was developed, approved by NC DCDEE (April 2015), piloted (June 2015), revised, and ready for use by ECE practitioners in June 2015.
Asynchronous, self-paced, online <i>Foundations</i> Train the Trainer module will be created and approved for pilot.				Met The online, asynchronous, self-paced Train the Trainer for the <i>Foundations</i> 0.5 CEU was reviewed and approved for piloting by NCDCEE in April 2015.	Met The online, asynchronous, self-paced Train the Trainer for the <i>Foundations</i> 0.5 CEU was reviewed and approved for piloting by NCDCEE in April 2015.

Challenges:

Over the course of the project, a few challenges were experienced. Each of these challenges is highlighted below, with a brief discussion of the issue and how it was handled by project staff.

- **Access to Foundations Books.** At the beginning of this project, NCDCEE distributed a limited number of *Foundations* books to all licensed child care programs in North Carolina, child care resource and referral agencies, community colleges and 4-year colleges and universities. Over the course of the project individuals representing all of these groups indicated that while the books that were received were greatly appreciated, not enough books were received to address the needs of each group. As having a book was a requirement for participation in the 0.5 CEU, individuals trained to provide the 0.5 CEU worked collaboratively within their agencies and child care provider communities to find funding to duplicate the book and provide access to training participants. While an order of new books has been in the works by NCDCEE for a while, these books are not yet accessible.
- **Online Learning Platforms.** As a part of this project, two online modules were developed: a 0.5 CEU module for practitioners and one “Train the Trainer” module. Initially identifying an affordable and practical online platform for the development and hosting of these modules was a challenge. Over time, CourseSites, a limited, but free version of Blackboard (www.coursesites.com) was chosen. During the process of these modules being created, NCDCEE developed its own online learning platform using Moodle. As such, materials developed for this project have had to transition from their original location on CourseSites to a new location on Moodle. This process is ongoing.
- **Engaging 4-year faculty.** Providing information to, and gathering information from 4-year college and university faculty proved to be a complicated task over the course of this project. During this project, numerous stakeholder groups participated in discussions about how to best disseminate information about *Foundations*, and opportunities to train their colleagues. Throughout this project, efforts were made to engage with 4-year faculty members, with limited success. A training event with the NC Birth-Kindergarten Consortium was offered, with approximately 20 participants from a variety of 4-year colleges and universities. While the training was a success, it affected a small number of individuals from these institutions. In addition, early childhood faculty from 4-year colleges and universities from across the state of North Carolina were invited to attend the Higher Education Institutes; unfortunately, very few actually participated (6 individuals representing 4-year colleges and universities as compared to 45 community college instructors), therefore significantly limiting the ability of project staff to provide opportunities for this group to learn, collaborate, and inform others about their use with the *Foundations* document.

Lessons Learned:

During this project, a number of lessons were learned about the opportunities and challenges to embedding *Foundations* into the everyday work of child care providers, technical assistance staff, professional development staff, community college instructors, 4-year college and university faculty, and students engaged in higher education coursework. This section of the report highlights some of the important lessons learned over the course of this project that inform the recommendations in this report.

Individuals from every sector (CCR&R, Community Colleges, 4-year colleges/universities, cross-sector TA/PD providers, etc.) who participated in one or more of the opportunities presented through this project (train-the-trainer event, growing greatness collaboration, higher education/technical assistance institutes, etc.) all discussed some challenges in considering how to fully embed the *Foundations* document into their work. Particularly, individuals mentioned a concern for being able to embed the content of the document in their work with students and child care providers if those individuals did not have real-time, practical access to the document itself. While the disbursement of books, and the availability of the entire document online was a tremendous effort to get the document into the hands of those in the ECE field, many still have trouble accessing the document in a useable format.

This challenge, however has not dissuaded these individuals from working diligently to collaborate and brainstorm opportunities to think creatively about how to provide opportunities to share information and access with students and child care providers. In fact, many individuals are excited about and interested in developing and participating in continuing professional development using *Foundations* as a base, and building off of it to explain other important aspects of high quality, developmentally appropriate early care and education services.

Some examples of how individuals are using *Foundations* in their everyday work include:

- Embedding of *Foundations* into Early Childhood coursework at NC Community Colleges by the Growing Greatness group.
- Development of training opportunities that extend the content provided in the 0.5 CEU, such as additional trainings that focus specifically on the developmental milestones in each domain and trainings that focus on how to use *Foundations* in lesson planning.
- The creation of hands-on tools that support the use of the *Foundations* document by child care providers and families alike.
- The alignment of all CCR&R trainings pertaining to teacher practice to the content of the *Foundations* document.

Closing Summary & Recommendations:

Throughout the course of this project, 100 individuals from cross-sector early care and education partners were trained as trainers in the 0.5 CEU content. Trainers include CCR&R staff, Smart Start staff, Head Start staff, EESLPD Staff, Community College Instructors, and 4-year college/university faculty.

Demand still exists for access to *Foundations* training, even after two full years of availability. Between January, 2014 and December, 2015, through Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge project 8.3 (CCR&R Enhancement), the NC CCR&R System offered 248 face to face sessions of the 0.5 *Foundations* CEU and trained 3,194 participants. To continue meet this demand in the future, and with the approval of NC DCDEE, the NC CCR&R Council added the delivery of the *Foundations* CEU into CORE deliverables for CCR&R agencies, effective July, 2015. Moving forward, each of the 14 CCR&R regions will be required to offer the CEU no fewer than 4 times per fiscal year. In addition, RttT ELC Project 8.3

required CCR&R agencies to align all trainings on teacher practice with the content of the *Foundations* document. To date, over 750 trainings within the NC CCR&R system have been aligned.

The following recommendations are suggested to further ensure the use of *Foundations* by the early care and education system in North Carolina:

- Support for coordinated efforts to advertise and train individuals beyond those who have already participated in training/train the trainer events. Providing access to agencies who work closely with families, such as the Children’s Developmental Services Agency, as well as continuing to provide a space for discussions about increasing awareness among other community stakeholders (pediatricians, legislators, faith-based communities, etc.)
- Further investment in the development of standardized CEU modules extending the initial introduction to *Foundations* to other areas of child development, developmentally appropriate practice, parent involvement, and other aspects of early care and education.
- Continued efforts to provide additional access to *Foundations* books.
- Provide support for technical assistance for those completing the 0.5 CEU to support the alignment of classroom practices with *Foundations*.